

Tips and Testimonials is a compilation of answers to the common question we hear from communities:

“What will make my application better?”

Our Answers:

- Documented Need
 - real versus perceived
- Community Based Planning
- Local Responsibility
 - Willingness to help themselves and play a role in the investment
- Long Term Sustainability
- Organizational Capacity
- Regional Solutions
- High Impact
 - multiple beneficiaries
 - multi-purpose activities
- Definitive Goals
- Measurable Results
- Regulatory and/or Statutory Compliance

DOCUMENTED NEED

- What is the need in the community?
- Is the need backed by facts?
- Is it more than a felt issue?
- Can the need be addressed in the terms of a specific program or project?

“You need to draw a real-life picture . . . You need to state the truth and then prove that . . . You need to show in your application what you are up against. . . They could have thought I was making this stuff up so I used our records to prove why we needed what we were asking for . . .



“ . . . facts and figures are the key to everything that is needed or even not needed . . . Show proof and ask for only what you need . . . Build what suits your own needs.”

- Kevin Lewis,
Fireman St. Francois
County Fire Dept.,
Leadwood



COMMUNITY BASED PLANNING

- Has the community involved a cross section of its citizens in assessing the needs and assets of the community?
- Is there an implementation plan for meeting the needs of the community over one, three or more years?
- Does the community have a vision for what it wants to become?



“Nothing stays the same, things are always changing. If you are not moving forward, you are moving backwards. You must always look at your community for changes to stay competitive. Community buy-in comes from participating in the assessment and planning process. Completing the assessment process allows you to highlight your strengths and work on your weaknesses.”

Wayne Morgan, Eldon Chamber of Commerce, Eldon Missouri

LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Is the community vested in the project?
- What is the community's ability to share in the cost of the project?
- Are there unrestricted funds the community has access to?
- What skills or professional activities can the community provide at no cost to the project?

“We approached our local responsibility both on the financial side and on the management side. We realized we had to take on what we could afford in order to do our part so funds could be available for other communities. When we talked about changing our (water) rates . . .





and when we were answering questions about the number of elderly people on fixed income, we provided that in terms of how much more they would pay a month and we compared it to other things like cable and the telephone . . . Most people realized that our rates were too low for too long.”

– Mayor Harlan Lamb,
Puxico Missouri

LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY

- Can the community afford to maintain the project after it is completed and state funds are exhausted?
- Has the community thought about additional revenues, contracts, activities pertaining to the project?
- Is there sufficient funding, qualified expertise, or partnerships developed to run the project?



“Sustainability comes from maintaining the right attitude, a lot of motivation, and a clear understanding of your vision. It comes from the understanding that grants and tax credits are not the means to the end. The means are using a sequence of steps defined to meet your goal. . . .”

“If you happen to be able to use a program that meets your needs (instead of defining your project to meet the program), then you will succeed and may move to your next step. Success feeds motivation and attitude....motivation and attitude create sustainability. Think of building blocks....one block placed out of sequence topples the rest. We had to train ourselves to function this way and it has become the heart of our organization.”

-Ralph Huesing, Manager Main Street
Clarksville, Clarksville

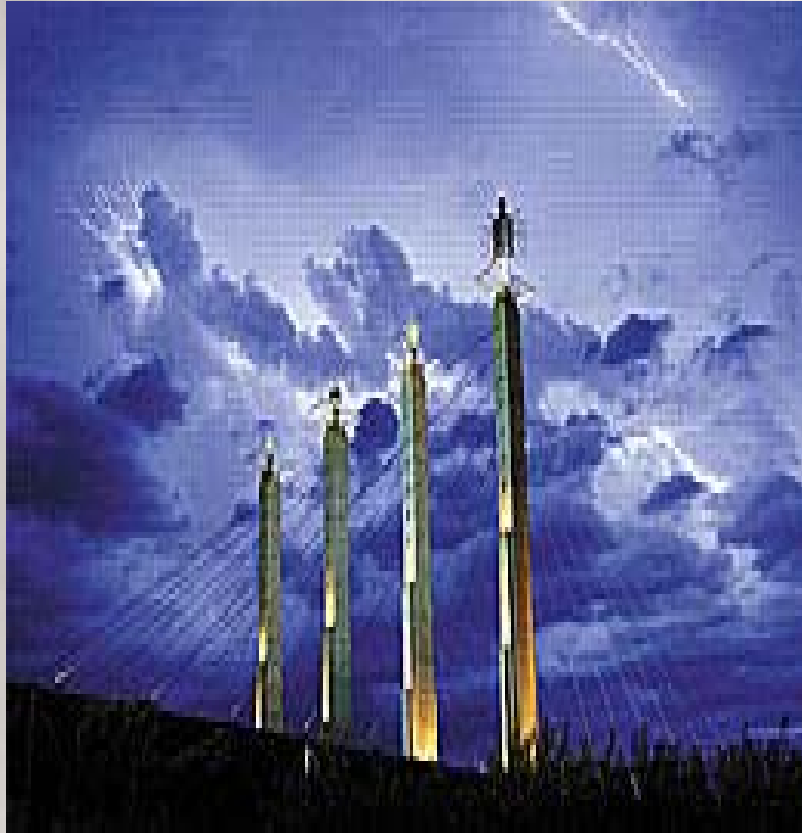


ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

- How long has the organization been in operation?
- Is the organization capable of undertaking the project?
- Have they had experience in this type of activity?
- Who is the key person in charge of the project? What is his/her expertise?



“Capacity strengthens your partnerships, it helps to service your community, and it helps build your organization . . . You know your organization better than anyone else, if you allow consultants to do work for you and not gain any knowledge from them, then when they leave they will naturally take their resources and capacity with them. . .



“You must continue to gain knowledge, abilities and processes through real experience so you can repeat them for yourself. It is our responsibility to establish a track record and a plan of action so others will invest in us.”

- Jean Paul Chaurand, Hispanic Economic Development Corporation, Kansas City, Missouri

REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

- Are there other alternatives to the solutions presented?
- Will it be less expensive or better maintained if others in the area are involved?
- Has there been discussions with other communities in the area to determine mutually successful projects?



“Working regionally is a tough sell for some communities since they have to drop the football rivalries . . . If we can get past that and they realize if one can get a little of a dollar spent and the other a little dollar spent then they are achieving something. It’s a different view than trying to go after the whole dollar and losing it all . . .

“ . . . Individually we don't have much clout but collectively we seem to be able to gain some good attention . . . Collectively, our ability to partner has allowed us to compete.”

- Myles Smith,
Community
Development, Howell
Oregon Electric
Cooperative, West
Plains Missouri



HIGH IMPACT

- How many people and communities will be impacted by the project?
- How many different activities will the project offer?
- What are the spin-off possibilities for this project?
- How many partners are involved?



“Once you learn to appreciate the value of the tax credit that you are competing for and what it will do for your donor, your organization and your particular project, you need to tell the state what you can offer . . . Sometimes you are too close to your organization and to your issue to express the whole impact you can create . . .

“you need to get other people’s perspectives that work with you to help you describe your value . . . Don’t be intimidated by the application, take it one piece at a time and communicate with both your heart and the facts.”

- Larry McDaniel,
Coyote Hill Christian
Youth Home,
Harrisburg, Missouri



DEFINITIVE GOALS

- Are the goals clear and concise?
- Does everyone involved share the same understanding of the goals?
- Are the goals clear enough to result in a measurable outcome?



“Definitive goals insure success. An organization and its members can get easily sidetracked in both short term projects and in long term goals, for that reason, you need a blueprint for success in front of you. Definitive goals not only serve your organization, they serve your community. . .

“ . . .they are what the community buys into and lends support to. Having definitive goals also allows for the organization to pull back and re-address the focus along the way.

- John Simmons,
Sedalia Main Street,
Sedalia, Missouri



MEASURABLE RESULTS

- What will be the result of this investment?
- What is the quality of the service or project not just the quantity of activities?
- Will the result be a reduction of An increase to ?
- Is what is being measured relative to the desired outcome and the definitive goals set?



“Not applying measurable results is like trying to sustain a professional football team without keeping score - how else do you know when you succeed? We used to count our activities: number of contacts, etc. . . We found the absolute importance of measuring those things that are meaningful and relevant to our youth

. . .

“it’s not what the service provider does that’s important, it’s that the kids are moving forward and not moving backward that is important . . . Measuring results offers an opportunity for us to change course if we find that we are not achieving our desired outcome.”

- Jim Braun, Youth in Need, St. Charles, Missouri



REGULATORY AND STATUTORY COMPLIANCE

- Is what is being asked for allowable by the law or regulation?
- Does it meet all the minimum requirements set forth for consideration?
- Is the application accurate and complete?

“Compliance with laws and regulations is a vital part of any project and should be considered from day one, at the project’s inception. No one likes the surprise of realizing they have a compliance issue or a fatal flaw in their deal structure on the back end of a project. It is important to fully know the issues and the programs up front. Applications received in the most positive light at the State are complete, contain accurate information and are well-thought out.”

Colleen Conrad, CPA, Rubin, Brown, and Gornstein, St. Louis, Missouri

